



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Assateague Island
National Seashore

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Assateague Island National Seashore

News Release

For Release: July 1, 2003
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PUBLIC WORKSHOPS ANNOUNCED

Assateague Island National Seashore will hold two public workshops to address preservation of the Assateague Beach Coast Guard Station. One workshop will be on Monday, August 4, 2003 at the Barrier Island Visitor Center located at the northern entrance to the Seashore in Maryland, and the other will be on Tuesday, August 5, 2003 at the Chincoteague Community Center in Chincoteague, Virginia. Both workshops will take place from 2:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Participants will be able to come and go during the workshop and will have an opportunity to meet individually with National Park Service personnel and volunteers with knowledge of the station's history, preservation actions taken to date, studies to date, visitor use and current natural and cultural resource conditions. Participants will also be able to make suggestions and give comments for consideration in the planning process. After the workshop, resource planners and specialists will use studies and comments generated to develop an Environmental Assessment report for the station. The report will evaluate re-use and preservation ideas. Individuals will also be encouraged to mail or email in their comments after the workshop.

The Coast Guard Station is 81 years old and is a Virginia Historic Landmark. It is located near the southern tip of Assateague Island across the channel from Chincoteague, Virginia, within the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge. For 45 years it served as an outpost of the U.S. Coast Guard (1922 to 1967.) Due to age and the harsh marine environment it is now in need of repair. Approximately one million dollars is required to preserve the station, boathouse and docks. Traditional sources of funding have been insufficient and the structures continue to deteriorate. "We need folks to put on their thinking caps," says Superintendent Mike Hill, "Figuring out some use that will preserve the buildings while protecting the environment is our job. We need the constructive suggestions of all the different interested parties."

Last year the National Park Service contracted a marketing firm to identify whether a historic lease might be possible for the Coast Guard Station. Historic leases have frequently been used as a means to supplement funding for preservation. The National Park Service is working to identify and evaluate a full range of alternatives to preserve the Station and is committed to finding a solution that preserves the natural environment of Assateague Island and its historic resources. Public input is an important part of the environmental assessment process. "We're fishing for good ideas," says Superintendent Hill.

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The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.